



NEWS



CONTACT: Fran Clader
(916) 843-3310

Office of Media Relations
601 N. 7th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2011

11-04

CHP HELPS TO GET NEW DRIVERS TO ‘START SMART’

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Nationwide, car crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers. California is not immune to this disturbing trend; in 2008 more than 24,000 drivers between 15 to 19 years of age were involved in fatal and injury collisions in this state.

Striving to keep teens safe on the road, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) continues to educate young drivers throughout the state with the federal grant-funded “*Start Smart*” program. The overall goal of this program is to reduce the number of people killed and injured on the state’s roadways through education.

“New drivers lack the experience that is needed on the road,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Through interactive education programs like ‘*Start Smart*,’ law enforcement is working to influence California’s teen drivers so they will make good choices behind the wheel.”

The CHP’s “*Start Smart*” program is a free, two-hour interactive driver safety class for teens and their parents or guardians. During the course, officers and speakers illustrate the critical responsibilities of driving and collision avoidance techniques. Parents are also reminded of their responsibility to help teach their new driver and model good behavior.

According to the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System, within the CHP’s jurisdiction, from 2006 through 2008, there were 34,086 fatal and injury collisions involving at least one driver between the ages of 15 and 19. These collisions resulted in 895 motorists’ deaths and 53,121 people injured. Statewide statistics show that 88,270 fatal and injury collisions occurred involving at least one teen driver, resulting in 1,488 people killed and 137,307 victims injured.

“It’s important to remember, accidents do happen, but collisions are preventable,” said Commissioner Farrow. “Poor choices behind the wheel of a vehicle can affect the lives of numerous people.”

Parents and teenagers can sign up for a “*Start Smart*” class by contacting their local CHP office. For the number of a nearby office, go to www.chp.ca.gov.

This program is supported by a grant awarded by the California Office of Traffic Safety Administration through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

###